

“What’s Right and What’s Wrong,” Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 9:14-18 – June 7th, 2015

- Today’s teaching will be part two of a series I’ve titled, “What’s Right and What’s Wrong.”
- Here in chapter nine, the Apostle Paul is confronting the Corinthian church as it relates to giving up their right’s when it’s wrong.
- More specifically, Paul says they should give up their right to eat certain meat just as he’s given up his right to financial support.

- Paul does this by using himself as an example of giving up a right of one’s own volition, knowing it would become a hindrance.
- Actually that’s the point of the passage; such that Paul first authenticates his apostleship, then give up his rights as an apostle.
- This is what we saw with our first right and wrong found in verses 1-3, which is this, “It’s not always wrong to defend my rights.”

1. It’s not always wrong to defend my rights (Verses 1-3)

- Paul asks four rhetorical questions and presents his defense because of those in Corinth who didn’t believe in his apostleship.

2. It’s wrong to deny someone’s rights (Verses 4-6)

- Paul asks them about having the right to financial support or is it only he and Barnabas who have to work to provide their living.

3. It’s wrong to muzzle the ox (Verses 7-10)

- Paul quotes Deuteronomy about muzzling the ox then compares it to a soldier, a vineyard keeper, and a shepherd of a flock.

4. It’s wrong if my right hinders the gospel (Verses 11-13)

- Paul says he won’t exercise his right to their financial support because he knew it would become a hindrance to the gospel.

5. It’s right to give up a right for the gospel (Verses 14-16)

14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. 15 But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me, for I would rather die than allow anyone to deprive me of this boast. 16 For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

- v14 He says that in the same way those serving in the temple make a living, so too should those who preach the gospel as well.
- v15 He then tells them he hasn’t used any of these rights and that he would rather die than allow anyone to deprive him of this.
- v16 Paul explains why saying when he preaches the gospel he can’t boast since he’s compelled to and woe to him if he doesn’t.

- Please know Paul isn’t boasting about preaching the gospel, rather, he’s boasting that he’s able to do so without their support.
- The reason he boasts is because God called him to this. Perhaps better said, “God ruined Paul for His plans and His purpose.”
- It was for this reason that Paul seems so blunt with them in telling them that he would rather die than to take a dime from them.

- It’s important to note that Paul was being supported by other churches; it was only to the Corinthian church that he says this.
- The reason I point this out is that Paul only received financial support from other churches knowing it wouldn’t be a hindrance.
- Sadly, some have taken this passage here in 1 Corinthians and used it against those who should be supported by the ministry.

Of this one commentator wrote, “There are those who use this passage to say that’s the way every ministry should be—that pastors or ministers have no right to be supported. But those who do fail to figure 2 Corinthians 11:8 into the equation, wherein Paul says he was able to forfeit his right to be supported by the Corinthian church only because he was receiving support from other churches. In addition, we know from Acts 18: 3, that Paul worked with his own hands making tents so as not to be a burden to the believers.”

Matthew 10:9–10 (NIV) — 9 “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts—10 no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

6. I can give up my right if it wins the lost (Verses 17-18)

17 If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

- v17 Paul says if I preach of my own volition, I have a reward, but if not, then I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.
- v18 He asks, what then is my reward? Answer, that he can preach the gospel freely by not exercising his rights as a preacher.
- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Paul is willing to preach even if he wasn’t paid to do it.

One commentator said it best this way, “Some are not supported by the ministry, but it has nothing to do with choice, it is just because of their circumstances. But if one does not receive support willingly, then they have a reward. However, if it is against my will that I am not supported, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship.”

- In closing allow me to share with you a decision I made early on that speaks to the principle of “entrusted with a stewardship.”
- What I’m speaking of is the decision to make available a box for tithes and offerings in lieu of formally receiving the offerings.
- While there’s nothing wrong with doing that, we didn’t want money to ever be an issue so we simply trusted God would provide.